Inexperienced instructors in IAF

3854. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether inexperienced training instructors are manning IAF's flying training establishments;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures proposed to upgrade avionics equipment and provide experienced pilots for meaningful training?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The flying instructors and senior flying supervisors posted to flying training establishments are carefully selected depending on their qualifications and experience. Before a pilot is posted as an instructor, he undergoes a rigorous 6 months course for flying instructional duties, followed up by upgradation of his category through written and flying examinations. In addition, constant checks are maintained to review the qualitative aspects of training.

(b) Not applicable in view of (a) above.

(c) Avionics upgrade is a constant process. The radio sets in Jet trainer Kiran Mk-I/IA are being upgraded for better quality output.

Regarding experienced pilots, requisite information is covered in part (a) above.

Soldiers killed in Siachen

3855. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian soldiers, killed in Siachen Glacier during the last three months; and

(b) whether Government propose to sanction additional compensation to the soldiers who are braving hostile enemy fire round the year to boost their morale?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Eight Indian soldiers were killed in Siachen area due to enemy action during the period from 1st April to 30th June 1998. There was no casualty due to weather conditions.

(b) In order to mitigate the hardships of the soldiers posted in Siachen area and to boost their morale, various measures have been adopted, which include, speedy rotation of troops, provisions of special extreme cold clothing items, appropriate shelters, modern communication system, and high calorie special diet. Besides this, a special allowance called Siachen Allowance has also been sanctioned as follows:—

(i) JCOs/ORs — Rs. 4667/-pm

(ii) Officers — Rs. 7000/-pm.

Self-reliance plan of DRDO

3856. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of prevailing hostile environment and the urgent need for modernisation and re-equipment, vital role of DRDO in Defence R&D is presupposed;

(b) what steps Government propose for stepping up allocations to give requisite thrust to DRDO's efforts to speed up pace of 10 years self-reliance plan; and

(c) what will be the allocation in Ninth Plan for Defence R&D and its implementation through DRDO?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The budgetary allocations to DRDO have been progressively increased from 4.90% of Defence budget in 1996-97 to 5.99% in 1998-99. Government are committed to provide adequate allocations to meet the requirements of various programmes of DRDO directed towards achieving the goals of 10 years' national mission for self-reliance in defence systems.

(c) The allocation in Ninth Plan for Defence R&D is proposed to be more than 6.25% of the overall Defence budget.

Employment to family members of Air Force personnel died in Aircrash

3857. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether representations for employment have been received from family members of Air Force personnel who died in aircrash between Tambaram and Hyderabad on 24th December, 1996;

(b) whether family members of these personnel were assured of all assistance by the then Minister of State for Defence and Air Chief Marshall;

(c) whether a representation dated 19th February, 1997 for employment in Ichhapur Rifle Factory or Metal and Steel Factory was received;

(d) if so, whether Government are aware that despite Air Headquarters forwarding this representation to Ordance Factory Board, no action has been taken in this regard; and

(e) What prompt action Government propose to take in this case.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) The representation for employment was forwarded to Ordance Factory Board (Cell) on 19.2.1997, since the employment sought was in Rifle Factory or Metal and Steel Factory at Ichhapur. Shri Bijay Kumar Chakraborty, father of deceased airman was also informed accordingly for his future referece in the matter. Ordance Factory Board in thier reply dated 7th April 1998 to Shri Bijay Kumar Chakraborty have intimated that there is no rule under which employment to his second son Shri Ranjit Chakraborty can be given by them, as his deceased son was working in the Air Force. He was accordingly advised to approach the Air Force authorities where his deceased son worked Earlier, employment for his third son Shri Surajit chakraborty was also sought. Shri Bijay Kumar Chakraborty had been informed on 15 July 1997 by Air Force authorities that his third son would be attaining the minimum age of 18 years for service only in 1999.

There has been no further reference either from Shri Bijay Kumar Chakraborty or his sons in this regard.

Mobile air defence system

3858. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high level defence delegation led by Defence Secretary visited Russia recently;

(b) if so, whether a deal for mobile air defence system was signed during the visit; and

(c) the cost and other details of the deal?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

New version of SU-30 MK

3859. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russia has developed a new version of SU-30 MK to suit the specific needs of India;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof and how far it meets the specific requirements of India; and

(c) by when the air craft are likely to be handed over to India?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir, such a version is being developed.